

To: Taheri, Diane[Taheri.Diane@epa.gov]
From: Vela, Austin
Sent: Fri 8/7/2015 2:04:47 PM
Subject: Fwd: Gold King Mine Spill Update

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Gray, David" <gray.david@epa.gov>
Date: August 7, 2015 at 6:33:51 AM CDT
To: "Vela, Austin" <Vela.Austin@epa.gov>
Cc: "Assunto, Carmen" <Assunto.Carmen@epa.gov>
Subject: Gold King Mine Spill Update

Austin - please distribute ASAP to NM congressional members.

David

We wanted to share the current information regarding the Gold King Mine spill in Colorado with you. We will send additional information as we receive it.

Gold King Mine Spill

08/06/2015 New Mexico Update

Region 6 is coordinating with the State of New Mexico (NMED) and with EPA Region 8 (who has jurisdiction over Colorado) to obtain background samples on the Animas River before the plume enters the State of New Mexico. EPA collected background samples at the first accessible point in New Mexico and near the first drinking water intake in New Mexico.

The plume is traveling at approximately 4 miles per hour. The **estimated** arrival time for the plume at the first drinking water intake in New Mexico (Aztec) is 8:00 PM Mountain Time yesterday.

According to NMED there are seven drinking water intakes on the Animas River, all have been notified. The Town of Aztec, NM closed their water intakes at 6:00 PM(August 5). The Town of Farmington, NM closed their water intakes at 10:30 AM(August 6).

NMED has notified the Navajo Department of Water Resources.

August 6 EPA Statement on Gold King Mine Release, Colorado

An EPA team working to investigate and address contamination at the Gold King Mine in San Juan County, Colo. unexpectedly triggered a large release of mine waste water into the upper portions of Cement Creek. Initial estimates are that the release contained approximately 1M gallons of water that was held behind unconsolidated debris near an abandoned mine portal. There were several workers at the site at the time of the breach, all were unharmed.

Following the release, the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment notified water users downstream so they could take appropriate steps to turn off intakes until the contaminated water passes.

The primary environmental concern is the pulse of contaminated water containing sediment and metals flowing as an orange-colored discharge downstream through Cement Creek and into the Animas River. The water associated with the release is obvious and highly discolored. As a precaution, EPA recommends that recreational users of the Animas River avoid contact with or use of the river until the pulse of mine water passes. Over the next several days, EPA teams will be sampling and investigating downstream locations to confirm that the release has passed and poses no additional concerns for aquatic life or water users. EPA will also be assessing damage near the mine portal and any residual releases of water at the mine site.

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